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THRICE MARRIED

A Personation Piece

IN ONE ACT

BY

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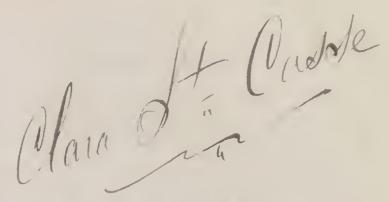
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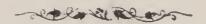
TIME IN REPRESENTATION—Three-quarters of an hour.
SCENE—London.

Costumes of the day.





THRICE MARRIED.



SCENE.—An apartment scantily furnished, with two doors in flat, one R. the other L. opening on landing place; cupboard L. and door L.—1st grooves, conducting to chamber—an easel, palette, portfolio and other insignia of the painter's art, scattered about the room. A table in centre, on which are lighted candles, and the remains of a feast.

VIVIAN seated at the head of the table.—WILMOT, ORMSBY. EDWARDS, and GUESTS, smoking and drinking. As the curtain rises they all have their glasses in their hands and sing "He's a jolly good fellow."

WILMOT. (filling) Now, gentlemen, I have one more last toast—not dear woman this time, but our jolly old chum, Vivian White! Vivian the Cræsus! Vivian the rich!

ALL. (drinking and rattling their glasses riotously) Vivian

White! Vivian the rich!

VIVIAN. (seated) Gentlemen, permit me in the curtest possible terms to remark—

ALL. Up, up—on your legs!

VIVIAN. (rising) Anything to oblige you, gentlemen. As I was about to observe, you do me proud, but you drink my health as a Crœsus, as being rich. May I be permitted to ask—a little curiosity is pardonable under such circumstances—in what I am rich? Not in thought surely, for, alas, I never think. Not in pocket, for my purse is as empty as my head; therefore, in what am I rich if I except your good society? No, the fact is, a poor painter in these times, with moderate talents, and less patronage, must fight hard to pay his rent, and keep the knives and forks from rusting.

Ormsby. Your knives and forks will never rust while you

have us to ply them.

WILMOT. That's the point I am coming to. These capital spreads—now, no nonsense, old boy—how do you manage them? They are too substantial to be conjured here by the wand of a good fairy.

VIVIAN. Good fairies don't always bring us good fare.

Wilmot. True—and whenever you invite us to put our legs under your table there is always plenty upon it.

VIVIAN. You are curious to know where the money comes

from?

Wilmor. I can't do the same thing, and yet I live on my means.

VIVIAN. Which means nothing.

WILMOT. For my part I give it up. Come, out with it, and no gammon! How do you manage it?

VIVIAN. You seem to take a close interest in my affairs!

ALL. We do, we do!

VIVIAN. Can you keep a secret?

ALL. Can we? Oh, oh!

VIVIAN. And you will never betray me?

WILMOT. We swear it!

ALL. (falling on their knees and elevating their glasses) We swear it!

VIVIAN. (lowering his voice) Well, first of all, I've two properties from which I obtain good revenues.

Ormsby. Houses? Lands?

VIVIAN. Nothing of the sort. Hush! not too loud. There's a young crinoline in the next room of an inquiring turn of mind. These walls are thin, and the sex are naturally inquisitive.

WILMOT. A feminine neighbour, eh? Ah, you sly dog!

Ormsby. Next room! Who is she?

VIVIAN. A devilish pretty girl, who makes bal masquê, and theatrical costumes. She works for Drury Lane, I believe.

WILMOT. Well, never mind the girl now, let us hear about

these properties.

VIVIAN. It consists of two old uncles.

ALL. Uncles? Ha, ha!

Wilmor. I see, when you want money you go to your uncle.

Ha, ha!

VIVIAN. Laugh away! Shall I trouble you for a light? (he lights his cigar) But I repeat, gentlemen, that my property consists of two uncles, who have been more than fathers, and I may say, mothers, to me. I confess it seems absurd to talk of having uncles—anybody can have them—but when they are constituted into a property and properly worked, a great point is gained. Now, I'll enlighten you. One uncle is maternal, and

lives at Cheltenham—John Quaverly, or "Uncle Jack," as he loves to be called by me—a musician. By teaching young adies to torture the polite instruments—haps, guitars, and pianofortes—he has managed to scrape together a snug sum. He thinks I'm a wild youth, only earing for women and pictures.

WILMOT. He's not far from the truth. He, ha! I beg your

pardon! Well?

VIVIAN. The other is paternal—he lives in Dublin. He was a ballet master, at Her Majesty's, some years ago, but plumpness and lumbago overtook him, and he was compelled to cut pirouettes, and accept a secretaryship in a Life Assurance Office. He's a fine old zephyr though, and I've heard said, that in his day, Horace Waddles was as light as a cork.

Wilmor. How liberal these uncles must be.

VIVIAN. After a fashion. I hit on an expedient a year or two ago to make them open their purses. I wrote to uncle Jack that I had married.

ALL. Married! Ha, ha!

VIVIAN. That I had married a French vocalist—Mademioselle Victorine Lepage, a dashing young Parisian. I knew a singer would tickle his fancy, and while I was about it, I thought I'd pitch it strong.

WILMOT. Ha, ha! Here's to Madame Victorine Lepage

White. Ha, ha! (all drink)

Vivian. Then, about this time, I wrote to uncle Waddles, and affectionately stated that I had just returned from Spain and a pilgrimage to the Alhambra, and that in a fit of passionate sentiment, I had led to the altar a beautiful dancing girl of Seville, Senora Lola Morena Norona, and had brought my bride to England. I described her rich Southern loveliness in a gushing style—talked of her large eloquent eyes—protested that Guido would have laid down his life to have painted her neck and hair, and—you know the style of thing—and I wound up the letter by a careful intimation that a respect for his old profession removed any objections that I might have had as to her being a public dancer.

WILMOT. A step in the right direction. What was the

effect of the letters?

VIVIAN. Their blessings came by post. Dublin sent me twenty pounds, and Cheltenham fifty.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

VIVIAN. But this was soon gone. The birth of my first child—

ALL. First child! Ha, ha!

VIVIAN. Idea number two. I'm hard up again—I write to say I'm a father—the parent of a beautiful rosy boy, which I wish to name after Uncle Jack. The idea pleases him and up somes another cheerful fifty.

ALL. Ha, ha, ha!

VIVIAN. "Never do things by halves," you know, so I drop a line to Dublin—spin the same yarn with appropriate variations, and the dear old zephyr sends me a post office order for another ten.

WILMOT. There will be the devil to pay when you're dis-

covered. I suppose you've no new scheme.

VIVIAN. (taking out his handkerchief and affecting to weep) Ah, gentlemen, you don't know what agitates this bosom. Senora Lola Norona, accustomed to the sunny skies of Spain cannot live in foggy, smoky London—excuse the manly tear—and my little French wife I fear is in a decline—withering like a flower for La Belle France. I fear I shall have to write of their death, and implore the dear old boys to send me a trifle to calm my despair.

WILMOT. What a bluebeard!

Ormsby. What is your idea for marrying foreigners—singers and dancers?

VIVIAN. Besides being romantic, they will not be able to write to my uncles. (Carlotta is heard singing, R.) Hist! that's my little neighbour. Her voice is like a strain of music on the water. (peeping through the keyhole of R. D.) I can just see one ear, and an eyebrow! (a door is heard to shut R.) She's gone! (points to R. side of the room) These walls are like wafers—I expect she often hears my nonsense!

WILMOT. (looking at his watch) I say, boys, we must be off!

It's time for the casino, if you're going!

VIVIAN. I'll join you presently.

He shakes them by the hand, as they bustle out, some singing, door in F. L.

Don't kick up a row on the stairs—it makes old Guffens savage, and I'm in his debt. (closes door, and pushes aside chairs, easel, &c.) Ah, me! those merry rascals will be the ruin of me, yet. The fib about my wives seemed to amuse them—by Jove, I've talked so much about marrying, that I expect one of these fine days I shall be settling my affections in good earnest—poor little Carlotta in the next room—I like her very much—she's pretty and accomplished, but hang it all, an orphan, and almost dependant on her needle. With her knowledge of languages and music, I wonder she does'nt set up for a governess, instead of wasting her taste in the construction of Turks and debardeurs.

(yawning) and all such picturesque looking people. (CARLOTTA is heard singing R.) What a pretty voice she's got to be sure! (he picks up his palette and opens door, R.—CARLOTTA is seen, as if passing) How do you do, Miss Lotty—you're always singing—I wish my heart was as light as yours. (toying with his brush on the palette)

CARLOTTA. (without) Good spirits is a golden gift which I

should regret to part with. (going) Good bye!

VIVIAN. (lounging by the door) Don't be in a hurry—I must coax you to give me a sitting for your picture.

Enter Carlotta coyly.

CARLOTTA. My picture? be careful what you are about. What would your Spanish wife say? Ha, ha!

VIVIAN. Spanish? so, so, you've been playing the eaves-

dropper, eh?

CARLOTTA. Not I, indeed! I can hear your voice in my room, almost as plainly as I do now. When I am silent, sewing away, I often hear you chatting and relating your adventures—so be on your guard. Those poor dear old uncles—to dupe them so cruelly!

VIVIAN. Don't say so! It was only a new plan of reaching

their purses.

Carlotta. I fear you young artists are sad wicked fellows—reckless and romantic—ha, ha! I can't help thinking of your two wives—Mademoiselle Le Page, and Senora Lola Norona—what awful stories you've told those dear old uncles—ha, ha! good bye!

She exits, D. in F. R., but returns when VIVIAN'S back is turned, shakes her finger archly at him, and exits unseen.

VIVIAN. 'Ponimy word she's very interesting. I often think of the romantic story she told me of her early life, and contrast the comfort she once enjoyed with her present position. An extreme feeling of pride keeps her aloof from rich relations, to whom she might look for support. I like her spirit! (lighting a meerschaum pipe) She's right, I have made precious dupes of my uncles. (a knock at the door L. in F.) Come in! (without turning) If I had a nephew and he wrote such absurd bosh to me, I'd avail myself of the rail, and look into the matter. (knock repeated) Come in! come in! (loudly)

Enter Horace Waddles, carrying a carpet bag, d. in L. F.

HORACE. Does Mr. White live here?

VIVIAN. (startled) That voice! (turning) "Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle!" How curious, uncle Horace—I was just thinking of you. When did you arrive? (he shakes him violently by

the hand, takes the carpet bag from him, and then falls into a chair)

HORACE. What's the matter, Vivian?

VIVIAN. (aside) I'm completely flooored with surprise. (aloud) Oh, a sudden giddiness—it'll be over—(aside) when you are gone. (he seems to faint)

HORACE. (excited) Bless me, the dear boy is going to faint. Where's the vinegar, salts, brandy, camphor? (running about

the room)

VIVIAN. (languidly) There's some in the cupboard.

HORACE. Where? where? (goes to cupboard, L.)
VIVIAN. You'll find it between a pie crust and a pair of boots.

HORACE. It's all right! (brings bottle, which he applies to his

nose) That will revive you!

VIVIAN. Yes, I'm getting better. (looking at the bottle) Why this is hair oil!

HORACE. This sudden illness alarms me. Hadn't I better call your wife?

VIVIAN. Unfortunately she is out shopping. (aside) What

a scrape I'm in to be sure.

HORACE. How provoking. I've come all the way from Dublin to see her.

VIVIAN. I hope your lumbago is better, uncle?

HORACE. Much better, thank you! (sits) And as I was saying, I'm all anxiety to see your Spanish wife. I like Spain—land of lace veils and castanets—bull-fights and figs!

VIVIAN. Beautiful country! full of dirks, matadors, dark

eyes, and treachery!

Horace. How fine it would be to get up a grand ballet the scene laid in Andalusia, and bring my niece out in London.

VIVIAN. Your niece—what niece? Horace. Your wife, to be sure.

VIVIAN. Oh, certainly—my wife! of course—it would be very jolly. (aside) if I had one!

HORACE. Of course she dances La Manola, the Cachuca, the

Fandango, the Bolero, the—

VIVIAN. Oh yes—Seville, Madrid, Toledo, Cordova—every town, in fact, from Gibraltar to the Pyrennees, ring with her praises. (uside) That's a whopper!

Horace. I shall compose a ballet for her. I have some interest with one of the theatres. (slapping Vivian on the back)

Egad! I like Spain!

VIVIAN. (aside) What makes him take to Spain so suddenly?

You're quite right—the blood there flows like wine in the veins. We Anglo-Saxons are cold and commonplace—

HORACE. How long will she be. I am impatient to see her.

And she was called in Spain the "Pearl of Triana."

VIVIAN. Exactly!

Horace. A flashing eye, and (nudging him) well turned ankle, ch? How I should like a pas de deux with her. (capering about, and clicking his fingers to the tune of the Cachuca, in which Vivian joins) Ah! bless my soul! the very remembrance of these Spanish dances sets my blood on fire. Come, now, go and see if you can find her, that's a dear boy.

Vivian. (aside) I've got myself into a precious mess. (aloud)

VIVIAN. (aside) I've got myself into a precious mess. (alona) I'll go and see if I can find her. Perhaps a change of air may assist my invention. (putting on his hat) I shan't be long, uncle—perhaps you'll help yourself to a pipe, and look over this portfolio.

Exit, D. in F. L.

Horace. Phew! what an odour of tobacco. I wonder his wife permits it; but they say these Spanish woman are fond of blowing a cloud themselves. (sauntering about the apartment) There's a careless, bachelor-like style about the room. I'm afraid Senora indulges the young dog. (picking up a lobster's claw) He seems to live well. He must manage to turn his canvas to account. (smelling one of the bottles on table) Claret, eh? in his letters he talks of beer. (peeping through keyhole of door, L.) This must be his bed-room. Zounds, my lumbago! Exit into room, L.

Enter Carlotta, d. f. r. dressed as a Spanish dancing girl—she comes in as though at home, and throws her mantilla on a chair.

Carlotta. Not here! I was sure I heard his uncle's voice. I have dressed myself in this Spanish ballet fashion with the idea of extricating Mr. Vivian from his difficulty. I hope my ruse may prove successful. I am afraid I shall make a poor "Pearl," as he called his Spanish wife. Ah! here comes his uncle. Now to rub up my Castilian.

Re-enter Horace Waddles, from room, i.

HORACE. Blood of all the Ferdinands! she looks like a feminine danseuse, ready to go on the stage.

CARLOTTA. (approaching him coyly) Que agradable anciano

yoo veo!

HORACE. (aside) What the devil does that mean?

Carlotta. (curtsying) Como está usted querido papa!
Horace. That language! that costume! it's my beautiful niece! (aside) I must try to make her understand. (pointing to himself). I'm your uncle—don't you see?

Carlotta. (looking perplexed) Como lo pasa!

HORACE. Come into the parlour! no, no, I'm your uncle—you must kiss and embrace me. (opens his arms and advances to her)

Carlotta. (shrinking back) No-puedo!

Horace. What dreamy trash Spanish must be! I can't understand a word she says. How shall I make her know who I am. (points to himself) I'm your uncle! (she affects to watch attentively his motions, and pretending to think he pointed to a bottle, fetches it) No, not a bottle—your uncle—your husband's father's brother—that's plain enough, I'm sure. (she shrugs her shoulders and smiles) How cursedly stupid of her not to understand English!

CARLOTTA. Que castima que no nos podemos entender uno

á stro!

Horace. (giving her an orange) Here's an orange for you. I must embrace her. (he advances again, and she playfully draws a poignard from her bosom) The devil!

(he retreats in alarm-she beckons him, and he returns

cautiously.

CARLOTTA. No tengo miedo.

HORACE. Put that weapon away. It's unbecoming a wife and a mother.

CARLOTTA. (laughing) Ha, ha! alza ola! (replaces her

poignard)

HORACE. What the deuce shall I talk about? she won't let me embrace her. Perhaps she'll dance. Will you do anything in this way? (capers about and points to his feet)

CARLOTTA. Verdaderamente yo lo pienso asi!

HORACE. A fandango, bolero, cachuca! Carlotta. Cachuca! si, si, senor!

Horace. Brava, senora! (aside) I'll buy "Spanish without a master" to-morrow, to be able to talk to her. (they push chairs, &c. aside—Horace watches her admiringly—she dances to music—at the end of which he capers about her in a wild manner, when she suddenly escapes through D. in F.—he dances down front) Bravo! bravissimo! I don't wonder Madrid went mad. What fire—what ancles—what motion! (looking round) Gone like a dream. I should like to smother her with kisses. Where is my nephew—Vivian!

Dances up to D. in F. and nearly knocks over Vivian as he is entering hurriedly.

VIVIAN. (speaking oside as he enters) I can't find a wife! I must say that she has tumbled into the Thames and drowned. I

see no other mode of escape. (perceiving Waddles' joy) What's the matter, uncle?

HORACE. (seizing his hand) I give you joy-you are a man

of taste.

VIVIAN. (aside) What can be mean? I must begin. (takes out his handkerchief) Oh, cruel, wicked fate!

HORACE. What's Fate been doing?

VIVIAN. Ha! uncle, I have no longer a wife.

Horace. No longer a what?

VIVIAN. (sobbing) I told her not to go near the water. The Thames is very different from the Guadalquiver, and—and—

(turning aside as if with emotion.

HORACE. And what, you silly jackanapes? your wife is safe and well. She was here just this moment—

VIVIAN. (aside) Here! oh, he certainly must have been

dining out. Uncle, what are you talking about?

HORACE. If it comes to that, what are you talking about? Mixing up the Thames and the Guadalquiver in one breath. I say she is beautiful—such eyes!

VIVIAN. (mystified) Who—whose eyes—

Horace. Your wife's! are you out of your mind? I've been gabbling Spanish to her.

VIVIAN. (aside) Poor man—he must be fearfully tipsy.

HORACE. And she danced for me. (clicks his fingers and dances about—VIVIAN following him) Danced deliciously—absolutely swam through it. Ha, ha! plague take my lumbago! (limps into a chair)

VIVIAN. (aside) Where could be have found me a wife? Perhaps it's just as well to humour his delusion. (changing his manner) Well, uncle, since you have seen my wife, I'm glad you like her. (aside) There's nothing like taking things easy.

HORACE. Like her? I adore her! she'll make a fortune in England. What a splendid line on the bills—"Senora Lola Morena Norona, for six nights only!" Every dead wall in town lighted up with the lustre of her name—broad posters with letters as long as your arm—that's the style to catch the public.

VIVIAN. (aside) I never was so puzzled in my life.

HORACE. By-the-bye, I just remember I've a call to make in Piccadilly. I'll jump into a cab and do it at once. When I return, you and I and your Spanish wife will sup together.

VIVIAN. (aside) I hope we may. We will clear off the

supper and this mystery at the same time.

HORACE. I shan't be long—have something nice, that's a dear boy. I'll call at the pastrycook's and order a game pie.

(yoing) How she did float through it, to be sure. (humming the tune) La, la, la! Zounds, my lumbago—I shan't be long.

Exit D. in F. L.

VIVIAN. (lighting his pipe, and cogitating) My brain is dancing a fandango of astonishment. He has seen my Spanish wife—talked with her—and she has danced for him. Admitted. Now the question naturally arises, who did he see, and where is she now, that he has seen her? Uncle is either dreaming—I'm out of my senses, or we are are all in a deplorable state of intoxication.

Jack Quaverly enters at back—Vivian does not turn—He brings with him a carpet-bag, hat-box, and violin-case.

Why, Uncle Horace, you are soon back—what have you for-

gotten? (aside) His senses, I should say.

JACK. (muttering as he enters) How dark the stairs are! I like to have fallen from the top to the bottom! (loudly) Well, Master Vivian!

VIVIAN. Good heavens! what do I hear? Uncle No. 2! (turns and throws down his pipe—Jack opens his arms, which VIVIAN flies into, and crushes the hat box—he then relieves him of his carpet bag, &c.) Dear Uncle Jack, what a surprise! I should as soon thought of seeing Titian's Venus enter the room as you. (he says this as they embrace)

JACK. I had some business in town, and without waiting to

write, I thought I'd take you by surprise.

VIVIAN. And you have fully succeeded.

Jack. I'm all curiosity to see your wife, Madame Victorine.

VIVIAN. (aside) I'm in for it now with a vengeance!

Jack. It's very odd! but do you know, when I was a young man, about your own age, I fell in love with a little French cantatrice, and if I'm not mistaken, her name was, likewise, Victorine!

VIVIAN. Strange coincidence! (aside) I shall be shown up

to a certainty.

Jack. And your boy, little Jack—does he look at all like his uncle? No, I fancy he's a round, chubby youngster.

VIVIAN. (aside) An idea! (aloud) I'm sorry you can't see

ium---

Jack. Can't see little Jack, the dear baby-boy?

VIVIAN. (quickly) No—for, unfortunately, he is out at nurse, a long way in the country. (aside) I've got rid of the infant, that's something!

JACK. What a unisance! I've brought him a box of toys and a fiddle! He shall be a musician—another Paganini, if I

can make him one!

VIVIAN. A fiddle! you seem to forget his tender age! His mother-

JACK. Ay, his mother—I'm burning to see Madame Victorine. I long to hear her warbling voice—it's a soprano, eh?

VIVIAN. Or a contralto, I'm not confident which. (aside)

I wish I was!

JACK. Perhaps a mezzo-soprano, soft and sweet—the voce di petto, that touches the heart. Where is she?

VIVIAN. (aside) What shall I do? I'm dead beat for an ex-

euse! (aloud) You ask where she is?

JACK. Making herself fascinating, I've no doubt. These young French women are fond of their mirrors. Come, tell her

to make haste, and see her Uncle Jack.

VIVIAN. (aside) What shall I do? (aside to AUDIENCE) Can anybody tell me where to get an immediate good-looking French wife? I should be so much obliged—you can't think! (goes up stage with show of despair.

Enter Carlotta, door in R. F., dressed in elegant French fancy costume—she has a roll of music.

What! yes—no, I'm dreaming!

CARLOTTA. (archly) Excusez moi. (seeing VIVIAN'S em-

barrassment, whispers to him)

VIVIAN. (aside, rapidly) Carlotta! Oh, she's an angel of goodness! I see it all—she was my Spanish wife also. (turning quickly to JACK) Uncle, allow me to present to you my wife. (taking her hand and presenting her) Madame Victorine! (aside) There's nothing, after all, like a bold stroke of impudence!

CARLOTTA. (shaking JACK's hand warmly) Je suis charmé

de vous voir.

Jack. Charming! charming! I understand you perfectly, my dear. (aside to VIVIAN) What does she say?

VIVIAN. She says, "Je suis charmé de vous—" (aside) some-

thing or the other!

JACK. I know—but what is that in English?

VIVIAN. In English? yes, I see! You wish to know wha it is in English? Why, she says she is enchanted to see you looking so well-wonders whether you come to town by rail or coach—and hopes you will honour us with a long stay—and

JACK. Did she say all that? What an Indian-rubber language French must be!

VIVIAN. It is. A little of it goes a great way—(aside) with

me especially.

JACK. (offering her a purse) Will you accept this, madame, as a token of my affection.

VIVIAN. (quickly) Of course she will.

CARLOTTA. (declining) Non, non—mon cher oncle. Jack. (to Vivian) What! why, she refuses!

VIVIAN. (aside to her) Accept it, by all means! (to Jack) She does not understand you, that's all! (attempting to speak French) Tonjours la meme—bon jour—di donc—qui va là. (aside) That's a good mixture!

JACK. Good—good! I'm glad you told her that! (aside to

VIVIAN) What did you tell her? CARLOTTA. Il faut que je sort.

JACK. Yes, yes. (aside) What the devil does she say?

VIVIAN. She says you must give the purse to me, and I'll take care of it for her. (taking it from him) I understand these things better than her. You know women don't know the value of money. (putting it in his pocket) We men manage it much better. Tra, la, la! (singing and takes stage)

JACK. (aside) She is very pretty! I wonder if she will sing

for me?

VIVIAN. Ask her—she is very obliging!

JACK. I wish I could. You had better ask her.

VIVIAN. (aside) My French is very shaky! (aloud) Ah, ah, Victorine, ma chere—voulez—vous— (aside to CARLOTTA) What the devil is sing, I wonder?

CARLOTTA. (aside to him) Chanter!

VIVIAN. Yes, chanter! Voulez vous chanter pour—? (aside)
My French is very poor indeed!

CARLOTTA. (curtseying) Oui, mon cher mari, avec plaisir! JACK. I understand that, she says she will—and now I think of it, I'll accompany her myself—not bad idea! (he gets his violin, goes up stage, and tunes it)

CARLOTTA. (aside to VIVIAN) I fear, in trying to relieve you,

I'm plunging myself into a difficulty!

VIVIAN. (aside) You are my guardian angel—my preserver—my fairy Proteus! On my knees I swear eternal love and fidelity! (throws himself at her feet, and kisses her hand rapturously unseen by Quaverly, then jumping up quickly) I must not let the old boy see me!

CARLOTTA. (aside) Hush, or you will ruin all! (VIVIAN

rises, and they exchange significant glances)

JACK. (coming down) Let her sing now, and I'll saw away!

(flourishing his bow like a baton)

CARLOTTA. (giving him a piece of music) Oui, oui! (coughs, and points to her throat) Ah, la maladie!

VIVIAN. She says she has got a bad cold. Ladies always

have when called on to sing.

JACK. (puts on glasses, and props music up against bottle, and affects to follow her when she sings) Now, then, not too fast, my dear.

CARLOTTA. Je suis prêt mon oncle.

(Song.—"Les Yeux Bleus." or any other graceful chanson that may suit the voice of the actress—at the end of the song she exits, door R. in F.

JACK. Bravo! Encore! She sings with capital taste. (turning to Vivian) Should she ever be a widow, I'll marry her

myself.

VIVIAN. I beg your pardon, Uncle Jack, but I shall object.

HORACE. (without door in F. L.) Vivian! Vivian!

VIVIAN. (aside) Hallo! Uncle Horace has returned. Dublin and Cheltenham together—now look out for a squall!

(retires up)

Enter Horace, L. in F. carrying a large pie, a paper bag, containing buns, &c.

HORACE. Here I am, Vivian—I've got a spanking game pie and some wonderful buns.

JACK. What! why, Horace Waddles, is it possible I see you?

HORACE. Jack Quaverly! The devil!

VIVIAN. I'm over head and ears in uncles!

Exit in chamber, L.

HORACE. How are you, Jack? (they shake hands) Vivian never told me you were in London.

Jack. I only arrived this afternoon.

HORACE. Just my case. I've not been in London for an age. I was curious to see Vivian's wife, to tell you the truth.

Jack. Have you seen her? Horace. Yes—have you?

JACK. Yes, and I'm rather pleased with the idea of her being a foreigner. Vivian is a romantic dog, and he would soon grow tired of a plain English wife.

Horace. Perhaps it is just as well that she comes from

abroad. How do you like her figure?

JACK. And her singing? HORACE. And her dancing?

JACK. I didn't know that she danced. HORACE. I didn't know that she sung. JACK. Why, singing was her profession.

HORACE. I beg your pardon, Jack—dancing!

JACK. But I've heard her sing. Horace. I've seen her dance.

JACK. French women are like the Italians—they all sing more or less.

Horace. French women? Spanish, you mean.

JACK. French!

Horace. Spanish! Seville, I'll swear, is in Spain! JACK. Paris I have been led to believe is in France.

VIVIAN. (peeping from the chamber) Go it uncles, darling! HORACE. (catching a view of him, calls) I say, Vivian, what are you about? Is your wife French or Spanish?

JACK. Speak immediately, is she Spanish or French?

VIVIAN enters slyly.

VIVIAN. She has confessed lately she is a mixed blood—a sort of half-and-half—A French mama, and a Spanish papa. HORACE. (angrily) Spanish he must have been, or else how

came her name Lola Morena Norona?

Jack. Lola Morena fiddlestick! her name was Victorine— Mademoiselle Victorine Le Page. (pulling a letter from his pocket) There it is plain as pen and ink can make it. (shows it to Horace)

HORACE. (also pulling a letter from his pocket) Here it is plainer than pen and ink can make it—"Senora Lola Morena

Norona." (shows it to QUAVERLY)

JACK. (looking full into HORACE'S face) There's something wrong here!

HORACE. I have a shrewd suspicion we are a pair of old

fools. (turning to VIVIAN) Will you explain, sir?

VIVIAN. I beg your pardon, but I must run to the colourman's—(attempts to go, they pull him back) I just remember I want some emerald green to finish a landscape.

Horace. Do you know your wife's name?

VIVIAN. What a question to ask a married man, and the father of a family. Sir, I am indignant!

JACK. What is it then?

VIVIAN. White to be sure—Mrs. Vivian White, according to modern social etiquette.

JACK. (taking him by the collar) No shuffling, sir—was it

Mademoiselle Victorine, of Paris?

Horace. (also seizing him by the collar) Or Lola Morena Norona, of Seville?

VIVIAN. On my honour you confuse me! Horace. (shaking him) Will you speak?

JACK. (also shaking him) And speak the truth, imposter!

VIVIAN. With pleasure, but the truth won't come any the quicker by your stopping the circulation of my blood. (they release him) Thank you, that's much more comfortable! HORACE. Now, sir, explain!

VIVIAN. The fact is, you are both right!

HORACE. Both right?

VIVIAN. Both of you! It seems singular I've no doubt!

HORACE. You are making a fool of me.

JACK: And a flat of me!

VIVIAN. Must I speak plainer? must I then confess? perhaps you comprehend the meaning of the word—bigamy!

HORACE. Bigamy? JACK.

VIVIAN. The worst is out!

Horace. You will be transported! VIVIAN. If its with joy I don't mind!

JACK. You are a disgrace to your family! Instead of the Academy, you shall grin through the bars of Newgate! (to HORACE) Come, Horace, let us leave the vagabond to his fate! (they turn up stage)

Enter Carlotta, d., in R. f., dressed as a young man, wearing heavy moustache, and a large cloak, beneath which is concealed foils.

CARLOTTA. (recognizing VIVIAN) How do you do, sir? am

I not recognized?

VIVIAN. (approaching CARLOTTA, and recognizing her after a moment) I beg your pardon my-(aside) Carlotta again by all that's protean! what new scheme has she, I wonder?

HORACE. (to JACK) Who is this person?

JACK. Some scapegrace friend of our precious nephew, I

dare say!

CARLOTTA. (turning quickly to the UNCLES) You wonder who I am, and call me a scapegrace, eh? I am Gustavus Vasa Wellington De Vere—and you two gentlemen are the two of all other gentlemen, I should wish to encounter-

HORACE. We? JACK.

CARLOTTA. Yes, you-Mr. Horace Waddles, and Mr. John Quaverly. You have conspired against my peace—my sister's peace—that young man's peace—(pointing to VIVIAN) and now I must have revenge! (producing the foils)

HORACE. (perplexed) I don't know what you mean.

JACK. I'm dumbfounded!

CARLOTTA. I'll tell you what I mean. I have a dear sister, Carlotta, who was a happy, light-hearted girl until she saw

HORACE. (to Jack) What you, Jack?

CARLOTTA. No, that young painter—he sought interviews with her, breathed vows of love, oaths of constancy—he engaged her affections. (aside to VIVIAN) You must bear me out in this. (aloud) I say he engaged her affections.

VIVIAN. (in a tone of sorrow) Alas! it is true.

CARLOTTA. And was about to offer her his hand, and your

HORACE. (to VIVIAN) Villain! JACK. (to VIVIAN) Monster!

CARLOTTA. When you cruelly forced him to desert her and marry I know not whom, leaving my poor sister to pine with grief and despair. (with mock determination) But I will be revenged! (presenting the foils) Choose! (she forces one into Horace's hands)

Horace. I don't know anything about fighting, besides— CARLOTTA. So much the better for me. (pressing a foil on

JACK) There, sir, you are both armed!

JACK. But, Mr. Gustavus Vasa Wellington de Vere, why do you draw me into the matter? I know nothing about it.

HORACE. And I know less.

Carlotta. Nonsense—I will accept no cowardly subterfuge. The grief of my sister calls aloud for—revenge!

Horace. The devil take your sister! I never saw her in my

life!

JACK. And I never want to see her. I will not fight! CARLOTTA. I'll fight you both. (to JACK) Guard! (to Ho-RACE) Guard!

VIVIAN. (interfering) But, young man—sir, consider how

much I love my uncles!

CARLOTTA. (exchanging a meaning glance, and thrusting him

aside) To the devil! (Music—She fights them both)

HORACE. Mercy-mercy! you slash only at me! Why don't you walk into him?

(CARLOTTA attacks JACK with affected violence—Horace, in the mean time, runs and conceals himself under the table, unseen by all)

JACK. Help—help! or I shall be run through! Nephew Vivian, rescue me from this ogre, and I am yours for life!

(VIVIAN affects to interfere, by rushing desperately between them, and takes the foil from Jack)

CARLOTTA. Where is the other wretch? Has he beat a re-

treat? (catching a view of him under the table, goes behind it, and beats him out with the foil) Where is he? that I may see my point through his back?

Horace. (crawling from under the table with his hat smashed)

Help—help! I am seriously wounded.

VIVIAN. (assisting him to rise) Wounded! my dear uncle

wounded? where?

HORACE. In the coat. (showing his coat-tail hanging half off) But, thank Heaven, there is no blood. (seeing Carlotta, who advances towards him, scowling) Oh, shield me from that brigand, who seeks my life!

VIVIAN. On one condition, uncle.

HORACE. Name it.

VIVIAN. That you pardon me for all that has occurred to-night.

HORACE. Pardon a man with two wives?

VIVIAN. Most men are content with one, but two are not sufficient for me—I must have a third.

JACK. What, after bigamy!

Horace. Damme! he wants to commit trigamy!

VIVIAN. My dear uncles, let us have an understanding—we are all in a cloud! (to Jack) If my wife were to speak French, and sing, you would be pleased! (to Horace) If my wife spoke Spanish, and cultivated dancing, and the castanets, you would be delighted! Now, don't say you would not—for my part, I must have a wife who can dance, sing, sew, and keep house—who is quick, clever, amiable and industrious, and all these qualities I find centred in this gentleman—(to Carlotta) whom I should be most happy to make my wife?

JACK. Are you deranged?

HORACE. Marry a man? what next I should like to know? CARLOTTA. (throwing off her cloak, hat and moustache, and taking up Jack's bow and fiddle, imitates him) "Let her sing now, and I'll saw away!" (flourishing the bow like a baton, in imitation) "Now then, not too fast, my dear." (coughs) Ah la maladie! (sings part of the air, she sang to Jack) Ha, ha, ha!

JACK. Can it be possible! Madame Victorine! I am puzzled

more than ever.

CARLOTTA. (turning to Horace, and imitating him) "She won't let me embrace her, perhaps she'll dance. (capers about, points to her feet) Si, Senor! (imitating him) "A fandango, bolero, cachuca!" Si, Senor, cachuca! "Bravo! I'll buy Spanish without a master!" ha, ha, ha! (she dances a few steps, snapping her fingers, as castanets)

HORACE. Senora Morena Norona! damme, that person is

a witch.

JACK. (to VIVIAN) Who is this extraordinary man, woman, gentleman, lady, person, party, individual, or whatever I am to call—

VIVIAN. (interrupting) My dear uncles, stay your curiosity, and I'll let you into the secret over a good supper. (pointing to AUDIENCE) Our friends here, understand the matter from beginning to end, an advantage which you will not object to their enjoying.

JACK. (perplexed) But for the life of me I can't understand

how a man can have two wives and want a third.

HORACE. Never mind, Jack. I'm sure of one thing. The

public will set it right if there is anything wrong here.

CARLOTTA. He can't appeal to a safer tribunal. As an experiment, leave the matter for the present in their hands. If the smile of approval greet us, why, then, make up your mind—it's just as well to be—

VIVIAN. (taking her hand) Thrice married!

HORACE.

VIVIAN.

CARLOTTA.

JACK L.

R.

CURTAIN.

TAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means Right of the Stage, facing the Audience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre; D. F. Door in the Flat; or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in Flat; D. R. C. Right Door in Flat; L. C. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L.D. Left Door; 2 E. Second Entrance; U.E. Upper Entrance.

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